

THE OMAHA DAILY BEE

E. ROSEWATER, Editor.

PUBLISHED EVERY MORNING.

TERMS OF SUBSCRIPTION. Daily Bee (without Sunday), One Year, \$5.00...

OFFICES. Omaha: The Bee Building, South Omaha City Hall Building, Twenty-fifth and N streets.

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OUR ATTITUDE TOWARD CHINA.

The Chinese minister at Washington has in an interview expressed his gratification at the decision of this government to maintain an attitude of neutrality in respect to China. The declared policy of the United States not to follow the example of European nations in acquiring Chinese territory the minister said would be regarded by his government as strong evidence of good will and is not only another bond between the two countries, but has a special significance at this time, as contrasting with the spirit of rapacity prevailing among the old world powers. We have said to the nations of Europe that we have no desire for the acquisition of Chinese territory and that we will not be drawn into any project that involves the partitioning of that territory. In taking this position we inform the world that this nation has a just regard for the autonomy of the Chinese empire and will engage in no efforts aimed at its dismemberment. If European nations go on seeking ports and territory in China we shall not interfere, only demanding that whatever interests and rights we have there shall be respected.

This is the wise and safe position. It is consistent with our traditional policy of China. It should be strictly adhered to. But the question arises whether, as the result of the expansion policy, in the far east, the time may not come when it will be deemed expedient to acquire Chinese territory. The expansionists urge that we need the Philippines in interest of trade with China. We require those islands, it is said, in order to develop our commerce in that quarter of the world and especially with China, where it is already, according to Lord Berosford, growing by leaps and bounds. If the European powers continue to pursue the policy of which the demand of Italy is the latest manifestation it is possible that after a time we shall have to consider whether the protection of our Chinese commerce does not require the acquisition of Chinese territory. In the opinion of some this is the logical outcome of the expansion policy. A writer in one of the magazines on the dissolution of the Chinese empire says that the American conquest of the Philippines is only the first step; that the possession of the islands will not merely entitle, but will even oblige the Americans to participate actively in the settlement of Chinese affairs. European students of the far eastern situation generally take this view, particularly those who believe that the dissolution of China is inevitable.

How long will it be before this view may find acceptance here? A year ago not a score of intelligent American citizens would have given a moment's consideration to a suggestion that the United States should acquire territory in the far east, even to the extent of a coaling station. Why may it not reasonably be apprehended that within a year or two, or when the Philippine problem shall have been disposed of, the spirit of expansion will reach out for Chinese territory, on the ground of commercial necessity? This is a danger of the situation that has been too little thought of. No one can foresee with certainty where the policy that has been entered upon will end. No one can say what future complications, difficulties and dangers this policy will bring the country.

The present attitude of the government in respect to China is wise. Our immediate duty and interest is to observe strict neutrality. But there is no assurance that in the not remote future, if the spirit of expansion is not checked, we shall not take an active part in the settlement of Chinese affairs.

DUTIES OF THE COMMISSION. The Philippine commission, which should enter upon its work within the next few days, is charged with duties not confined to an investigation of the condition of affairs in the islands. In addition to this the commission is charged with making all practicable efforts to acquaint the natives with the intentions of this government and to persuade them to accept its authority. It will plainly define the policy which it is proposed to pursue and it will report to Washington from time to time what in its judgment is desirable to be done with a view to establishing peaceful relations.

The president said in the instructions to the commissioners: "It is my desire that in all their relations with the inhabitants of the islands the commissioners exercise respect for all the ideas, customs and institutions of the tribes and races which compose the population, emphasizing upon all occasions the just and beneficent intentions of the government of the United States." If the Filipinos can be made to understand and appreciate this there will be a chance of accomplishing something, but the failure of the commission appointed by General Otis in January to convince them is in their interest does not encourage hope that the present commission will succeed in its object. It is said that the Filipino leaders realize that they made a disastrous mistake. Possibly some of them do, but there is nothing to indicate that this feeling is general or that the people as a whole are not still determined to resist to the last American rule.

EQUITABLE TAXATION. The Michigan legislature has passed a bill whereby the property of railroad, telegraph and telephone companies is to be taxed the same as the property of other corporations and private individuals. Such a law virtually enacts the provisions of the constitution of Nebraska, which expressly requires the levy of taxes by valuation so that every person and corporation shall pay a tax in proportion to the value of his, her or its property. In other words, the burden of taxation, to be equitable, should be imposed without discrimination or favoritism upon all classes of property. This, however, does not appear to satisfy the managers of the properties owned by corporations whether they are in Michigan or in Nebraska. Under the system of taxation that prevails in this state the assessment machinery is so arranged as practically to exempt pub-

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